

# Henry's Freedom Box

Ellen Levine

## Materials

- Chart paper
- Large and small Post-it notes
- [\*Henry's Freedom Box\*](#) by Ellen Levine, illustrated by Kadir Nelson
- [Comprehension Quiz](#) (PDF)
- [Vocabulary Worksheet](#) (PDF)
- [Vocabulary Worksheet Answers](#) (PDF)
- [Slavery and Underground Railroad Thinking Chart](#) (PDF)

## Set Up and Prepare

Each student should have a copy of Slavery and Underground Railroad Thinking Chart.

Create a class Slavery and Underground Railroad Thinking Chart on chart paper.

## Directions

This lesson uses the book as a starting point for a Social Studies unit on slavery and the Underground Railroad.

1. Before reading the book have students complete the “What I ‘think’ I know” section of the Slavery and Underground Railroad Thinking Chart. Give small post-it notes to each student to write their thinking on so later they can move their thinking to another section of the chart. It is important that students understand that some of the information that they write in this section may wind up not being true as they learn more about slavery and the Underground Railroad.
2. Share student responses as a class. On large post-it notes, place students’ ideas on the class thinking chart.
3. Explain to the students that they are going to read a story about slavery and the Underground Railroad. Before reading, have the students write down questions they might still have about slavery or the Underground Railroad. When the students are finished writing their questions, have them turn to a partner and share questions. By doing this, all students will feel that they have been given a chance to share their thinking. After 2 minutes of sharing, elicit some questions to write on the class thinking chart.
4. Explain to the students that although the book they are going to have read to them is a picture book, it is based on a true story. They will learn a great deal of information about slavery and how slaves were treated. Instruct them to write down the information they learn about slavery and the Underground Railroad on post-it notes when the teacher pauses throughout the story.

Pause several times throughout the story to give students an opportunity to write down the ideas/facts they are learning.

For example: Pause after the fourth page of words. Some possible responses students might have are:

- Slaves weren't allowed to know their birthdays
- Slave children can be taken away from their families
- Slave master's lived in big houses
- Slaves could be freed by their owners
- Slaves could be given away by their masters

5. After reading the book have students share some of the information they learned about slavery. Write their ideas on post-it notes and add it to the "Facts I've Learned" section of the thinking chart.

6. Have the students go back and look at the first section "What I 'think' I know" of the class chart. Ask students if any of their responses here were proven true by the story. If so, move those post-it notes from "What I think I know" to the "Facts I've Learned" section.

7. Students can also write down any connections they made with the story in the last column. Remind students that there are 3 different types of connections they can make.

- Text to Text
- Text to Self
- Text to the World

8. Use this chart during the rest of the Social Studies unit. Students can add to the "Facts Learned", "Questions I still have" and "Connections" sections of the chart. Students will look forward to moving the information in the "What I think I know" to the "Facts Learned" section.

## **Lesson Extension**

Use this book to discuss theme with students. Students can make a T-chart with different themes on the left and proof from the story to support the theme on the right side.

Students can research important people that had an impact on slavery and the Underground Railroad. Have each student collect information on one person and display the information in a PowerPoint slide. Put all the slides into one PowerPoint presentation that you can present to the class and other students learning

## Assess Students

Did students identify new information about slavery and the Underground Railroad? Were the students able to make connections between the story and their lives, other books, or the world?

- Part of Collection:

[Historical Fiction Genre Study](#)

- Everything You Need:

[The Underground Railroad: Everything You Need](#)

- Subjects:

Assessment, Slavery, Underground Railroad, Abolition, Literature, Reading Response, Literature Appreciation, Research Skills, Literary Response, Nonfiction Writing, Historic Figures, Human Rights, Social Studies through Literature, Black History Month, Survival, Educational Technology